

[Adopted by the OTCA membership on January 9, 2007]

Old Town Civic Association Waterfront Area Planning Standards

To facilitate future redevelopment of the Alexandria waterfront area in a manner which is harmonious with the history of the waterfront and the character of Old Town, the Old Town Civic Association has developed the following standards to guide the City of Alexandria's planning and approval processes for future development along and near the waterfront. The waterfront area is defined as that area within the City of Alexandria lying to the east of Fairfax Street and running from the Mirant Plant on the north to the north side of Jones Point Park on the south. Each of the following standards is of equal importance; all of them must be strictly adhered to.

- 1 – Under no circumstance shall a new or reconstructed building exceed 35 feet in height. In the case of a building with a pitched roof, height will be measured from the existing grade level to the midpoint of the roof line.
- 2 – The City shall require the creative reuse of existing historic buildings in lieu of demolition and building new. An historic building is defined as a structure that is more than 100 years old, as specified by the City Charter and Zoning Ordinance, or is deemed to have historic value by organizations, including the Old Town Civic Association, which address issues of historic importance to the City of Alexandria.
- 3 – New structures along the waterfront shall, under no circumstance, be closer than 75 feet to the water's edge. Where practicable, new buildings will be set back at least 100 feet from the water's edge. The water's edge is defined as where the mean high tide touches the shore at non-flood stage.
- 4 – Mixed uses on individual properties or within individual city blocks shall be encouraged. Mixed uses shall include residences, offices, retail, restaurants, and small European-style hotels.
- 5 – There shall be no net loss of parking spaces within the waterfront area; i.e., any existing parking space (on or off-street) that will be lost as the result of a property redevelopment must be replaced by a parking place within 400 feet of the existing parking space. The City should make an effort to provide for public access to existing private parking lots and garages during evenings and weekends that presently are largely vacant at those times.
- 6 – Building exteriors shall be similar to and compatible with structures of historic architectural merit now in existence east of Fairfax Street.
- 7 – The City shall develop uniform street-furniture standards which will provide a uniform historic look and feel in all public spaces east of Fairfax Street in keeping with the character of the Old and Historic District. Such standards shall apply to signage, lighting, colors, seating, type fonts, etc.
- 8 – The City shall develop uniform standards for public parks, walkways, and other public places east of Fairfax Street. Such standards shall be compatible with the uniform historic standards developed for street furniture. Where appropriate and feasible, landscaping and public art east of Fairfax Street must be consistent with Old Town's historic nature.

9 – Properties purchased with the City’s Open Space funds cannot be resold to developers. Adaptive reuse of structures with historic or architectural merit on properties purchased with Open Space Funds shall be considered.

10 – Waterfront redevelopment shall provide for a continuous walkway or promenade along or as close as possible to the water’s edge so as to maximize pedestrian views of the Potomac River and vistas visible from the water’s edge, such as the Capitol building and the Washington Monument.

11 – The water’s edge, particularly in park areas, shall be beautified where feasible with vegetation and other improvements consistent with these standards and designed so as to minimize the presence of unsightly debris and garbage. Where feasible, observation platforms shall be built or enhanced so as to increase views of the river and the Washington skyline. Where feasible, space will be made available along the water’s edge for direct access to the river, including small, non-motorized boats.